

THE TRIANGLE

THE WEBSITE OF THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER AT DREXEL UNIVERSITY

December 4, 2009

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Drexel interior design students are competing to create a sustainable and functional living space to be implemented in a new Dranoff Properties apartment complex on 777 South Broad Street.

Carl Dranoff, a 1970 Drexel alum, gave the design competition to Professor Debra Ruben, who supervised five teams of three as they worked on their designs throughout fall term. The major criteria for the project are that everything must be sustainable, from the woodwork to the accessories, and that everything must be contained in a \$15,000 budget.

On Dec. 10, judges Carl Dranoff, Director of Sustainability for the City of Philadelphia Katherine Gajewski, Philadelphia Fox-29 News reporter Kerri-Lee Hackett, and University of Pennsylvania's environmental sustainability coordinator and senior facilities planner will convene to hear each team's project proposal.

"In the end I think it's really going to be what the judges feel like is the best look for the space and I don't know how much of an influence Carl Dranoff will have," Professor Ruben said. "They're doing two other spaces with professionals, [and] a professional design firm is staging two other apartments, so I think that

they're going to pick the design that is most

unique and the most [sellable]."

According to Ruben, an otherwise good design may not be selected if it is similar to the professional designs.

Gajewski will specifically be looking for "a blend of feasibility and practicality with a good dose of creativity."

The winning design will be announced on a blog for the competition. This will give the competition exposure outside of Drexel University and Dranoff Properties, which is mutually beneficial, as Drexel receives accolades for its design program and Dranoff Properties receives publicity for their new apartment complex. Every team proposal will be posted online, as well. The winning design will then be exactly implemented into a hospitality suite, which is a space that residents may rent for their guests.

"The winning design will be executed exactly as envisioned by the





Drexel students," Melissa Wyatt, director of marketing for Dranoff Properties stated in an e-mail. "In fact, one of the criteria students must comply with is contacting the furniture manufactures to confirm the availability of their products. Students must also...use green and environmentally friendly furniture, lighting, bedding and linens, etc. The students will need to use all of their creative ingenuity and design prowess to make the 1,100 square-foot space come together. We are very excited to see what the teams present to us, and know they will exceed our expectations."

According to Professor Ruben, the students will be involved in the implementation process. If they chose to customize an aspect of the design, they will be able to do that.

Junior interior design majors Christine Murray, Courtney Robinson, and Candace Spence are "very excited" for next week's presentation. They said the most difficult part of the project was keeping the criteria of sustainability in mind. For them, sustainability

meant anything that was made ethically, locally, or organically. The \$15,000 budget made the project more difficult as they found that the most sustainable products were usually more expensive. However, they recognize the significance of the project, citing it as a "real job" and a great addition to their portfolios.

"Dranoff Properties is exceptionally proud to be able to involve so many bright and promising students into what will be Philadelphia's first mixed-use LEED certified building," Wyatt said.

According to Wyatt, Dranoff is leading the way in Philadelphia for sustainability, and has the rare opportunity to involve the community and incorporate students' perspectives into their latest project.